

## **Bull City Tenants United**

# **Protecting Tenants' Right to Healthy, Sanitary, and Environmentally Sustainable Housing: Proposed Ordinance(s)**

### **Summary Recommendations**

1. **Improve the inspections process** to be more accessible to tenants.
2. **Revise and expand the City minimum housing code** to ensure that it covers the health, safety and quality-of-life issues tenants are facing.
3. **Make it illegal for landlords to collect rent while a unit is in violation of the minimum housing code**, following the example set by Charlotte.
4. **Expand and reform the use of direct repairs** so that the city more effectively uses its power to directly fix issues tenants face when slumlords refuse to make repairs.
5. **Require that tenants be compensated when repairs don't take place in a timely manner.**
6. **Better regulate parking and towing** to make landlords responsible for ensuring that tenants and invited guests will not be towed from spaces guaranteed by tenants' leases, and to end the exploitative use of towing fees.
7. **Clarify utility billing and increase landlord responsibility**; make it harder for landlords to bill tenants unfair amounts for utilities.
8. **Protect tenants' right to organize and from retaliation when they engage in organizing.**
9. **Work towards rent control where possible.**
10. **Require resident approval for renovations** which aren't necessary for health and safety to make it harder for landlords to use renovation as a tool for gentrification.
11. **Establish a Ban the Box ordinance** for rental applications covering past evictions, criminal history, and other categories.
12. **Ban the use of unenforceable lease terms** and fund a third-party entity to provide free legal review of leases for tenants.
13. **Notify tenants** (in addition to home/landowners) about zoning changes.

*Note: This ordinance is written on the assumption that the Durham City government will make affordable housing its highest priority, as affordable housing is rapidly disappearing here. Otherwise, the Bull City Tenants United: Tenants Rights Ordinance Recommendations (10/9/21) herein will either fall flat or have negative consequences. Renovation should not mean displacement. The impact of these recommendations requires close and consistent monitoring.*